EKPOMA CLAN, BENIN PROVINCE

WP. 10057 A.

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Intelligence Report on
Yendi Dini by
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WP. 10057A

Part I. General.

Sept. 1932.

1. INTRODUCTORY.

1. Scope of Report. 1. This report deals with those villages or quarters of Yendi which did not accede to the Gbewa Village Group. Although the people of Kpalu, Wuro, and Dzohi have been united officially with the Court of Gbewa, and until 1931 were called Kondi-Kpalisa-Lungbung and Nyanyan Yendi. The latter office has been abolished, and this report will show that such a step is unfitting to judicial as well as administrative considerations.

2. A full description of native Dagbon in Gbewa is given in this report. It will be found, however, that the ancient judicial and administrative organisation of each of the groups was very similar, differing only in a few minor details.

3. All documents have been translated into the native, both literally and in a common meaning, and have been approved. It was found, during interpretations, that the people of Yendi villages (Dong) were intensely loyal and attached to the Ya Na of Gbewa. Though he was admitted to be the head of the community, his authority choices were held against him, and the people were quite ready to acknowledge his lawful and ancient rights, but they were not prepared to approve his retention of his present authority, for as judicial functions are concerned.

Increased colloquially they said "We shall not get a fair deal, so we prefer to have our cases tried by the District Officer." This was stated in connection with proposals for giving local judicial jurisdiction to the Dong. Yet

was very clear that the institution question appears [illegible] in their minds, as is only natural, and too elaborate or otherwise of the proposal might- and probably would- have been differently received in other circumstances. This feeling is now already passing away.

4. The opinion of the educated and christian community was that of approval of administrative proposals, but many of them expressed a desire for further facilities to attend the pro inclial court, except where cases only involving native law and custom were concerned. Here again it was latterly that the present personnel of the native court is unpopular and its [illegible]. This attitude is shown at the present day by the extremely large number of appeals which are laid before the District Officer. The educated community is as yet, of course, in the minority, but in view of the fact that there are in Ibadan and the three other groups, 2 government schools, 5 education schools, and 14 churches of various denominations, the position will under truly become stronger. Many scrolls for clerical, police and other forms of service are drawn from here, and their influence is considerable. This question will be considered later, but at this point it need only be stated that the two main objections which have been put forward by certain persons in support of their preference for the provincial Court are (1) resort to juju swearing to enable judgment to be given and (2) lack of proper regard paid to weight of evidence. They therefore go out to say further decentralisation of the judicial side of the native administration as making it more difficult to get a quick and satisfactory settlement of their cases.

h. Description of people.

5. Before proceeding further, it is necessary to define the terms to be employed when describing the people under review. Examination of the history of the area shows that the word "Clan" cannot be used, although it has in the past

[illegible] been utilized as a centralized form of tribal [illegible]. In [illegible] and [illegible] of the word "[illegible]" to [illegible] of the [illegible], will [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] all the [illegible] which [illegible] [illegible] to be [illegible] to the [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] of a [illegible] of [illegible].+ To begin [illegible], each unit consists several villages, all of which are [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. While the word "[illegible]" can only be [illegible] of these villages, or [illegible] of [illegible], but not with accuracy of the whole people. The word that unites each group of villages is that they all live on the land of the head of the community to whom they are service, and they trace their origin [illegible] to [illegible], and their customs are in the main similar. To avoid confusion, therefore, the term "village group" will be used. This [illegible] village group will mean the villages living on the land of the Chwezi of [illegible], and who recognise him as their supreme authority.

6. Briefly, the inhabitants of [illegible] trace their origin to Benin, with a few exceptions. Their language is a dialect of Bini, in most cases very similar, though not always easily understood by pure Bini. Some of the differences are in the roots of the word, and some in intonation or pronunciation alone. Their tribal marks, type of features and other physical characters also proclaim their Edo origin.

7. The group has at its head an Ohwezi or head chief. This is a hereditary position, the succession going from father to son. In each village are the Ekhaimo or titled men, who from the Ohwezi's point of view are the men in charge of the villages, for it is to them that his orders are sent, and they are responsible to him for their due performance by the village.

+ Notes and Queries on Anthropology 1929 edition. P.55

8. The village council is in each case composed of the Edion or Elders, presided over by the Odionsere, with whom sit the Ekhaimo- though this is only if they are themselves of Edion grade. The Edion represent the body of responsible opinion in the village, they used to try the cases and settle disputes. The orders of the Enogie were transmitted by the Okhaimo to the Odionsere who then called the meeting of Elders to discuss the matter and set the executive machinery in motion.

9. Reference has already been made to the Bini origin of the Ekpoma group. Details will be given in the individual reports, but the position may be summarised by stating that the Ekpoma, Ogoji and Uzoro village groups came probably at about the same time. Their ancestors originated from Benin as colonists having been granted the power and position of an Enogie or Ozie. It is possible that they may have been related in Benin, though the claim that they were "brothers" probably means simply that they are of common origin. Uzoni village group was probably a military outpost. Originally it had no sort of alliance with the other three groups, and until government made an end to inter-village warfare no Uzoni man ever went to Ekpoma for any ordinary purpose.

10. All groups used to serve the Oba of Benin, from whom Enogie titles were taken. When an Enogie died, his eldest son would send a message to the Oba announcing the death. The Oba in return would send a white cloth to signify his assent to the burial. Then the heir sent a number of men to the Oba as a present, to "beg for the ada", would take from one to three years, and the importance with which this ceremony was treated shows the amount of control the Oba continued to exercise.

11. The Enogie's village is called "Uzuarre" while the outside villages are "Ugule". These were in most cases formed,

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] their [illegible] believe.

16. [illegible] a lower government school [illegible] and 5 [illegible] school. It has [illegible] contained that [illegible] on the people's [illegible] and their [illegible] of the [illegible].

17. [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible] to [illegible] a man home, married and buried in [illegible] the [illegible] of the outside world. He visits [illegible] and [illegible] a more [illegible] of administrative and judicial machinery than can [illegible] be supplied by the native administration in its present state of development. His daily work takes him into other Districts, but he builds his house on the main [illegible] apart from his native quarter thus [illegible] the link with village life.

18. These persons [illegible] the Christian community, still very considerable in the minority, the large majority still [illegible]. These farmers are [illegible] of the minority. In the course of the partial investigation

a meeting was held in one of the Ekpoma villages in which an ex Court Member who had been punished for misconduct. Although the elder of his own village made no particular objection to his presence at the meeting, a message came from an association of young men of another village instructing the village to insist on his removal, which resulted in the elder refusing to talk so long as he was present. It eventually transpired that the illiterate elders were afraid of these young literates, who-they thought- had the ear of Government and could by writing petitions get them into trouble.

c. Glossary of terms used.

19. Enogie = hereditary head of village group.

Okhaimo (pl. Ekhaimo) = titled man.

Otu = age grade.

Odion (pl. Edion) = Elder.

Igele = adult, middle age grade.

Igbonughele (pl. Egbonughele) = youths. (lit. "Sweepers of the Street").

Onogele = village meeting place.

Okpor (pl. Ekpor) = symbol of authority of Edion, usually a stick more or less carved.

Idumu = quarter.

Egwarre = Enogie's village.

Igule = Other villages

Ikor = messenger.

d. Method of investigation.

20. Every village in the District has been visited and all information has been obtained on the spot. Careful cro s checks have been made in every case, particularly where information has appeared to contradict or amend hitherto accepted explanations of customs. Careful note has been taken where village meetings and native ceremonies

have

have been a level of activity, prestige in position and tradition. Where possible actual cere onies have been observed, and facts learnt have been used to corroborate or supplement general descriptions which may have been given. Care has been taken to see the actual heads of the communities, and no preference has been given to persons who may have position in the Native Administration, such as Court Members.

21. Finally, attention must be drawn to the special conditions under which this report has been compiled. During the past 12 months there has been a certain amount of disturbance inthe District, both financial and administrative. Since the visit of the police escort in June and July 1931 for the purpose of tax collection, many complaints have been brought up against certain Court members, four of which have suffered cancellation of membership. Also the Onoji ceased to be District Head after a considerable agitation had been stirred up against him by the Ukpoms people. It must therefore be borne in mind that in certain cases information may be biassed. Certain Chiefs have been, as it were, "sent to Coventry", and their villages are now denying them their real Native position, a situation that made the acquisition of accurate information in their cases difficult.

22. The field work for this report was begun on December 28. 1931, and concluded on February 9. 1932. No hostility or opposition was encountered anywhere. Every village was again visited for the discussion of proposals between 6th and 21st September. 1932.

2. [illegible]

a. Area and boundaries.

23. The Ekpoma District as a whole measures about 110 square miles, and in 1925 the density of population was 89.05 to the square mile. A comparison with Irrua and Uromi with 266.00 and 227.50 to the square mile respectively the district is comparatively sparsely populated. The 1931 tax assessment figure for the male population was as follows:-

Ekpoma Village Group 3326.

24. To the North of the District is the Ugoro Village group, and Uhun, a village under ~~Ora~~ Eru in Irrua District. This latter place was originally attached to Ekpoma but the people have attended Irrua Native Court ever since. The people of Uhun in 1909 petitioned to be allotted to Irrua and Ugoro lie on the East of the Ekpoma District and on the South is found the Uzebi group. The Benin Divisional boundary forms the South western boundary with Uhi and Ghor, and on the west side is Ozalla and the Ora Country.

b. Physical features.

25. The whole District is Forest. There are no outstanding physical features. A central ridge runs through the centre of the District, roughly along the Ekpoma- Ora road, falling in height Eastwards. There is a considerable drop on the Benin road, and North and South of this ridge the levels fall to some 500 feet above sea level.

26. This central ridge forms a watershed for a few small streams, none of which flow actually in Ekpoma land. The river Ojilekpo which forms the source of water supply for Ekpoma, Ile etc is in Uhun land, rising near the boundary.

27. The District as a whole is badly situated for its water supply, most of the villages being some considerable distance from these streams. Particularly is this true with regard to the villages situated on the central ridge.

28.

III [illegible]

29. The [illegible] in a [illegible] of [illegible] n [illegible] [illegible] le. Owing to the rather haphazard manner in which these village [illegible] has been formed, and the fact that they are bound to act on in a traditional manner than on a tribal basis, it is inevitable that some [illegible] will be vague, and traditional [illegible].

[illegible] from the hearth place of the [illegible] in the land of Benin, on the [illegible] [illegible] there in the Ile and Ife area proper, and travelled to [illegible] re be that [illegible] and [illegible] all the [illegible]. From [illegible] Benin, [illegible] some size, and more [illegible] the [illegible] the father of [illegible] [illegible] by the Oba of Benin, and went [illegible] to found a [illegible] the [illegible] such to the high Ekpon country and cause the [illegible] [illegible] is. [illegible] to build his house, and in the course his family and [illegible] family form the nucleus of the [illegible] village. The Idanre eventually [illegible] a [illegible] [illegible] of presenting slaves captured in war and enrolling them in the villages to be [illegible] is slaves. The Idanre [illegible] of the main road [illegible] Gulli from [illegible].

30. Historically it may be [illegible] that was the founder of Ife, as and the [illegible] of the [illegible], [illegible] the son of [illegible], the [illegible] and Ojiobe and Ife being merely a version of the [illegible] roll concerning the origin of the Oba of [illegible]. "O [illegible]" may "Oja-Oba"..... the King of Ife", and the traditional source of the line of Ogun and the state and that

It was at Ife that Ogiohe "learnt the tabus". Teaching them to his son, Uda, means that the customs of Ekpoma are founded on and are a development of those of Benin.

31. The names of the Enogies as given by the present holder of the position are as follows:-
(Several must have been omitted, the Elders themselves saying that these are all they can recollect:-)

1. Uda
2. Igiebome
3. Owema
4. Ogiokere
5. Okpobo
6. Odia
7. Odawele
8. Ikhiakhe
9. Ogwamele
10. Eromor
11. Ediale
12. Akhimie (present Enogie)

32. As has been described in para 10 of Part I each Enogie had to take his title from the Oba, who gave him permission to succeed to the throne. The last two messengers who were sent to Benin by the Enogie Ediale, the father of the present Enogie, are still alive, their names being Obamogie (The Oba gives the title to the Enogie) and Osinli. They described how they remained nine days in the palace in Benin, having presented the Oba with a cow and a goat and sundry minor presents. On their return they brought to the Enogie a small carved wooden Kola box called "Urhiebere", while the Oba sent messengers with a new Ada and Eben to the Enogie thus recognising his accession. This ceremony was not carried out by the present Enogie, as by that time the Ishan Division had been separated from the direct influence of the Oba.

33. Although coming originally from Benin, relation with the Oba were not always peaceful. The Enogie Ikhiakhe, for instance,

sent two messengers to Benin who were never seen again. Assuming they had been detained as slaves or worse, Ekpoma warriors seized a large number of Benin people in retaliation and stopped al service to the Oba. A Benin regiment was sent out to quell the revolt under Chief Ologboshere and a warrior named Ebohon. The villages on the Benin side were attacked, and over 100 captives were taken to Benin. Ebohon apparently remained behind and was a thorn in the Ekpoma flesh, until a united effort drove him away to Uhi(Ehor) and finally to Akure.

34. Possibly after this rebellion the Oba began the practice of sending a chief from Benin to be a "District Head", to see that the people paid their services as required and to enforce peace. The names of these chiefs are forgotten, but the man responsible during the period immediately before the coming of goverment was chief Osumah. When the expedition of 1897 and the subsequent troubles of Benin forced the Oba to concentrate his forces on his home front, chief Osumah was withdrawn, and no representative of the Oba has since been appointed in his place.

35. It is claimed by the Enogie that sons of former Enogies were responsible for the foundation of Opoji, Ekpon, Egoro. It will be seen however that these place themselves give different stories, each claiming independent origin, but admitting all came from Benin and were "brothers". In view of the very large number of wives owed by the Oba, and the consequent necessity for providing for large numbers of sons, this claim is not improbable.

36. Although neighbours to Irrua, Ekpoma has always been at enmity with it. There would seem to be some connection by blood or by treaty-with Uromi, as they are forbidden "to see each other's blood". Uromi people explain this by a story that one Agba an Enogie of Uromi was driven out of Uromi by Binin warriors, and fled to Ora, where he was protected. Returning via Ekpoma he was shown friendship by the Enogie, who was himself at that time beset with foes, and the two swore peace juju. At any rate whatever the relationship was, it was of the slightest nature,

and need not further be considered here.

37. Turning to the Igule villages of which there are sixteen, we come first to the group which bear a general name of UHIELE. The Origin of this name is unknown, nor can the raison d'etre of the association be explained, though in all probability it was occasioned by the need for mutual protection in war. UKPOKE, AKAHIA, EHANLEN and the Idumunegbon Idumu of Igor village form one clan, tracing a common descent and being prohibited from intermarriage. EBOAKMARA and IDUMEGAH form another similar clan, while IDUMIGUN and IKHIRO are separated and unrelated to the any member of the Uhiele group.

38. The first of these is UKPOKE. A man named Ugiole who according to one story fled because of an adultery with Oba's wife, came from the Ibogbe quarter of Benin, and having travelled for some time settled on a hilly spot near Ekpoma. (Hence the name "Ukpoke"- "place of a hill"). He was accompanied by a half-brother, Obaguhen, and another younger called Ahregieme. When Ugiole had settled down, the Enogie Uda of Ekpoma heard of his coming and sent for him. When eventually Ogile deigned to take notice of the summons, he sent Ahregieme to see the Enogie. When he reached Egwarre the Enogie said he only wished to honour Ogiole who, however, persisted in his aloofness. Accordingly the Enogie gave Ahregieme the title of Edohen, and gave him land at AKAHIA, which he founded, with the approval of Ogiole. Eventually Ogiole relented, and went to the Enogie, who gave him a wife called Eson. When she died her children carried her corpse to Egwarre, and were permitted to retain the title of Eson. The descendants of Ogiole's first son, however, had no title till recently, when the Enogie gave the head of the family a title to enable him to get a Native Court Warrant.

39. Meanwhile Obaguhen had founded a village of his own. While hunting one day, he hungered. Find a young palm tree (Ohanlen) he cracked the nuts and ate. Thinking the land must be good from the abundance of these he built his house and founded EHANLEN village.

40. Last of the clan, IDUMUNEGBON Idumu of Igor village was founded by one Egbon, a son of Ogiole who committed adultery with his father's wife and was driven out. He fled to Igor where he was given land by the village.

41. These four villages then, form the Ugiole clan. Joined to them are the villages of the Onohror clan, EBOAKWARA and IDUMEGAN. The former was founded by Onohror who was the son of the Enogie Uda. At a time of faline, Onohror went for food, and finding here a quantity of "Akwara"(-bush yam) he built his house and founded a family. The name of the village is derived from this yam. Igan, a son of Onohror, together with one Okoro "also one of the Enogie's family" came and founded IDUMEGAN, which is named after the former.

42. IDUMIGUN, associated though unrelated, was formed by two separate families. The founder of one Idumu was Ukulu, a blacksmith), who was driven from Ugbegun as the as the result of a quarrel. He met Onoigbe who had wandered from Iruekpen village of Ekpoma and had settled here, and was given land by him. The village was originally called "Idumuneigbe", but the fame of the blacksmith caused it to be known as at the present time. The Ugbegun family were however always regarded as strangers, though inter-marriage has in time obliterated any real distinction between them. The blacksmith juju is situated in the centre of the village.

43. IKHIRO quarter has a similarly mixed origin. Ogodor, a native of Usonigbe in Benin Division, was continually being "troubled" at home, and left to better himself elsewhere. When he arrived here, he met a woman called Ohon, in similar condition, and married her, their progeny forming part of the quarter. To them came Okpe and Aivbi, husband and wife, "children of the Enogie" of Ekpoma, some say sent to supervise these Benin strangers, who settled alongside and formed half of the quarter. To the family of these latter people belongs the senior title in the quarter, giving some verisimilitude to the story.

44. These Villages, then, form "Uhiele", which term is- as has been said- of unknown origin. The other Villages of Ekpoma village group, though some of them associate for sundry purposes, are not designated by any similar joint name.

45. Chief of these are the UHUMUDUMU group, consisting of UHUMUDUMU, UGIOREN and UKPENU. The stories of their origin are vague and in the case of, Ugioren violently disputed between two parties.

46. The central figure is one UWASE founder of UHUMUDUMU who is said to be a son of the first Enogie of Ekpoma, UDA. Whether this means actual blood relationship, or merely that Uwase was an inhabitant of Egwarre who came to live some three miles from there is not clear. There are no marriage tabus between Egwarre and Uhumudumun of which he is the founder, which would tend to give support to the latter theory. Uwase lived in the Egbelewasi Idumu which has the central "Ozogele" or meeting house for the whole Uhumudum group, which includes Ugioren and Ukpenu. Uhumudumu, which is a large village was formed partly by the family and extended family of Uwase, and partly from immigrants from surrounding places.

47. The origin of Ugioren is in dispute and all evidence is contradictory. The story which is most stoutly maintained is that the Oba Ozolua of Benin had a son called Oren, whose son Ogban left Benin to travel abroad. Arriving at Ekpo a he settled down and was given the land by the Oba, when only he served, although the village later attended the joint meeting of the Uhumudumu group. As Ogban refuse all service to the Enogie of Ekpoma, he refused any title, and to this day there is no recognised Okhaimo title in the village. The other story is, however, that Oren was a son of Uwase, hence the inclusion in one meeting, but that Oren being somewhat of a rebel refused to serve the Enogie. It seems hardly credible that an outsider(though from Benin)could arrive in Ekpoma, and settle on land within a quarter of a mile of Uhumudumu, and between Uhumudumu and Ukpenu, and continue to assert his independence with success. The claim that the land was

as given by the Oba and not by the Enogie is probably false. The Enogie himself claims he gave three titles to the village and that they with the rest send him his due share of meat killed and other services. There is no doubt, however, that no one now claims any title, a fact which must be noticed, as the people are not slow in claiming any honour or privilege, however slight, to which they think they have a right.

43. UKPEKU was a son of Uwase of Uhumudumu, and founded the village bearing his name. As has been mentioned all three meet together in Uhumudumu for promotion ceremonies of age grades and other matters which will be mentioned later. Although each village has its own Odionwere they all recognise the Odionwere of Uhumudumu as being senior to all. The fact that Ugioren join in their recognition may be additional evidence of its common origin.

49. Beyond Uhumudumu is the large village of IHRUEKPEN about whose origin there is a similar dispute. Uhumudumu claims that Uwase's second was Iruekhide, whose sons spread westwards and founded Ihruekpen. This is hotly denied in the village, however, who claim as their founder one EKPEN who they say was a son of the Obi of Agbor. He for a long time was ill-treated by his father and deprived of his rights. So Ekpen went to complain to the Oba of Benin, and to ask for help. The Oba agreed to help him, and said would send soldiers against the Obi of Agbor. This was more than Ekpen intended, but the Oba persisted, evidently thinking it a good excuse to fight against Agbor. Ekpen in remorse rushed back to warn his father, who lay in wait for the Binis and defeated them. Hearing the news the Oba of Benin cursed Ekpen who became crazy and wandered about for some time, until he came to Ekpoma. Here he settled on the extreme outskirts of the Enogie of Ekpoma's land. Iruekhide is said, by these informants, to be a woman, native of Ihruele in Benin, who became Ekpen's wife, and whose sons with other immigrants formed the village of Iruekpen. The central juju worshiped by the whole village is called "Ekpen" to this day, which gives considerable support to the above story. A very large number of titles was conferred on the village by the

by the Enogie, probably to bind them to him. The people claim that they do not serve the enogie, though they admit(albeit with some reluctance) that the land is his.

50. Southward from Iruekpen, is found the scattered village or Igor, of composite origin, also on the extreme boundary of Ekpoma land. The first men there were two brothers Ufeele and Oba who came from Benin, said to be sons of one of the Ooas of Benin. They settled down on land given to them by the Enogie of Ekpoma, to who at first they rendered only a limited allegiance. Oba later went north and founded a quarter in Irhuekpen. These two men founded the Idumus of Evoogie and Igor respectively. When they were settled down a brother of theirs, Alege, came from Benin and settled near to them and founded Udo. These three quarters formed the nucleus of the village. Later came Ebon a son of Ogiele (founder of Ukpoke) to settle in Idumunogbon, which is, as has been mentioned, a part of Uhiele, though also part of Igor village. The founder of Oke Idumu came from Ihruekpen, and finally- perhaps as an envoy from the Enogie of Ekpoma came Ogie, one of the sons of the Enogie Uda of form Uvive. In Igor too a large number of titles were given, but it seems probable that they were for diplomatic rather than any other purposes. The senior title Osuwah, was given to Idumunegbon, member of Uhiele group, but there is a great dispute about the seniority and duties of the remaining titles, none of which have been 'taken' by the claimants. The Chief loyalty of Igor was to the Oba, until recent years, and an Ethimi tree be seen, planted by one Ekomor from Benin to remind the people they were servants of the Oba. The above mentioned Idumus, however, early joined in one, and adopted Ekpoma customs.

51. Joined to Igor and now part of it is a small quarter EDUEKI was formed by one Ewon who was a trader in slaves for the Oba. He, it appears, used to purchase criminals or insolvent debtors and send them to Benin. Ishan evidently being a fruitful source of supply, and Igor a base conveniently near Beni territory, he settled here permanently, and his descendants identified themselves with the rest of Igor.

52. Of a similar origin is UGBIYOKO, a small village southward of Igor, and also on the [illegible] of Ekpoma land. Ogwa and Ikhina came from Benin also as traders in slaves for the Oba, and settled originally in Eluoki. When the Enogie of Ekpoma attempted to assert his power, the descendants of these men refused to compl, and moved away to the present spot, so called from the plantation of cocoa yams(Iyoko) they made. Eluoki being rather nearer Ekpoma submitted. Ugbiyoko are distinguished by not having accepted Ekpoma customs(as will be described later), and until forced to attend Ekpoma Native Court by the formation of the Divisional Boundary, never went there for any purpose other than trade. No title was ever conferred on the village, who kept themselves strictly aloof from the Enogie. The village rendered services to the Oba of Benin, through Chief Uwanguo who was their sponsor in the palace.

53. Turning to the North of Ekpoma, a small village of military origin is found. E'ANDO was founded by one Idubor, who came from Ada-Udo(said to be in "Hausa" land by some, and in "Yoruba" land by others). He was, it seems, a leader of a band of soldiers who worked their way south on a marauding expedition; on reaching Ekpoma it was decided to settle down on land given by the Enogie who at first apparently used the people as mercenary soldiers. They assisted Ekpoma in its wars against Ebohon, the Bini guerilla leader: they succoured the Enogie of Opoji when once he was driven from his village: they helped the Enogie of Egoro in his wars. The adopted Ekpoma customs to some extent, but continued to serve the ruler of Bida whence they originated with oil, goats and cowries. Four men are alive in the village today who state that their father were the last men to go on a mission of this nature to Bida. To this village gravitated the Yoruba strangers coming to Ekpoma, and until the coming of pax Britannica they were a thorn in the Enogie's side. He gave them two titles"to coax" them to be friendly, but with only limited succes , and the quarter lived "vi et armis" until the establishment of British rule. There were, however, a few Benin people on the land occupied

by the villa e before the coming of the Hausas, who were the family responsible for the worship of Osalobuwa(God). These live in one small Idumu of Emando, Ikumunegbon and are prohibited from inter-marriage with the Enogie's family. It is here that the Enogie come to make his O be title, which ceremony he performs in order to entail the succession on his eldest son. The priest of this juju in ancient times had the right of leading the Enogie to the throne, but the present Enogie declares that this right has lapsed.

54. Finally to the north East of Ekpoma is the large village- almost a group of villages- of ILLE. This was founded by one Ose who came from Ibiaro in Kukuruku, and who was given land to live on by the Enogie of Ekpoma, Udu. When shortly afterwards the Oba of Benin sent for all the Enogies of Ishan "to divide the land" between them, Ose accompanied the Enogie of Ekpoma to Benin. The ceremony of "dividing the land" evidently consisted of giving fetishes and symbols of royalty, and those given to the Enogie of Ekpoma were too heavy for him to carry. Ose took on himself the duty of carrying them, and bore them back to Ekpoma. When they reached Uhumudumu village, Ose put down his load to rest, which resulted in the worship of the land juju for the whole of Ekpoma being located in this village. When reaching Egwarre, the Enogie in gratitude made Ose an Ogie, put him on a semi-independent status, gave him the title of "Okunotor"(carrier of the land) and decreed that his children after him should bear the heriditary title of Ogiese. The Ille people to this day call themselves"Ibi-Okunotor"(children of Okunotor) and the title of Ogiose is distinct from that of the other Ekhaimo of Ekpoma in that the title is not taken by each successive holder from the Enogie, but the eldest son succeeds automatically. The Enogie also exempted Ose and his children from performing any "service" with the exception of giving him the heads of slaves killed in war and all leopards killed by them in the bush. Owelle, the Idumu of Ose himself, is referred to colloquially as "Egwa-Ose"("Egwarre of Ose"), and it will be seen later that the holder of the Ogiose title has prerogatives distinguishing him from other Ekhaimo. The

The several Idumus of Ille were formed by descendants of Ose, and all meet for general purposes in Owelle Idumu.

55. It is, at this point, necessary to enter a "caveat", with reference to the many stories of descent from "Uda". This name has grown into a legend, and it is probable that his name is used in a general sense for the old Enogies. Some of the villages are certainly of more recent foundation, and to sa that the founder was a "son" of Uda" in all likelihood means simply that he was the son of one of the Enogies. This fact must also be remembered when the various titles are discussed. Most of the holders claim they were given their titles by "Uda", but it is obvious that so far from the extensive villages of Ekpoma village group springing up in one man's lifetime, the truth is that there has been a slow development through a large number of years, title being granted from time to time as found necessary. Jealously and emulation betwee the villages, however, has caused a large number of villages to claim priority of foundation and descent from the actual original Enogie. Over these claims the mist of time has fallen, and the absence of any records leaves the issue uncertain. Probability, however, points to the seniority lying between Uhumudumu, Ukpoke and Ille.

56. It has thus been shown that the Ekpoma village group is of composite origin, united territorially and by the possession of a common head in the Enogie who is the owner of the on which the people live. It will be discussed in the next section how far and by what methods the influence of the Enogie was extended beyond the confines of Egwarre as regards the political life of the people

57. <u>Under British Rule</u>. The Ishan Division was formed in 1905, and Ekpoma Native Court was established, linking for executive and judicial purposes-the village group of Ekpoma, Opoji, Egoro and Urohi. Ukun group used also to attend Ekpoma Native Court, but when in 1909 they joined with Ewu, they began to attend Irrua Native Court.

58. The Enogie of Opoji was appointed District Head over the Ekpoma District, as being the senior of the Enogies. There was no

for some time some considerable friction, however, and in 1931, in common with the rest of the Division, the office of District Head was abolished.

59. In 1921 the Native Administration was set up, with a central Council at Ubiaja, of which body the Enogie of Ekpoma subsequently became a member. This body was gazetted as being the Native Authority for the Division, under the title of the Ishan Native Court.

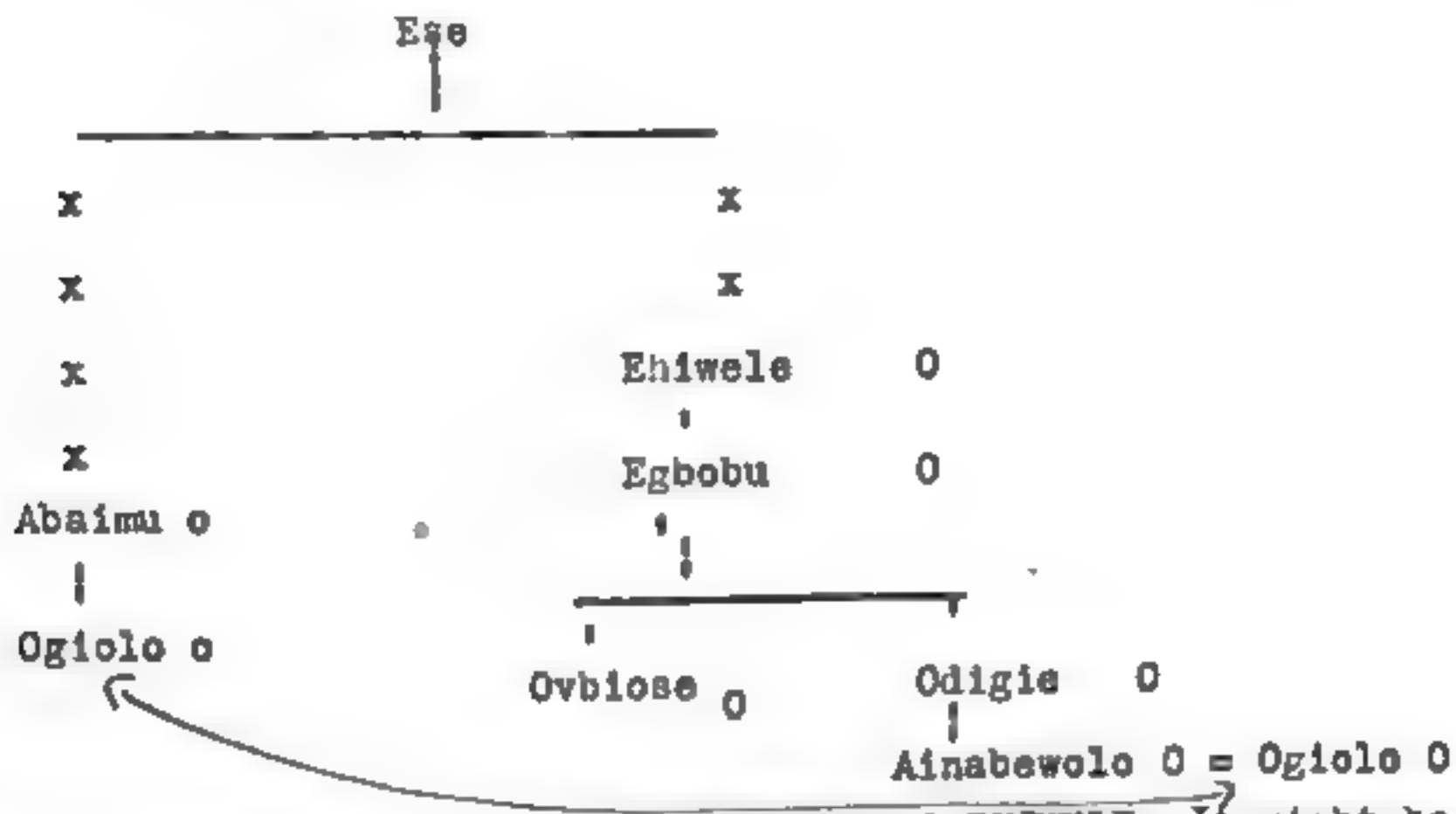
60. In 1932 a police escort visited Ekpoma in connection with tax collection, but apart from that episode the history of the district has been more or less uneventful.

IV ADMINISTRATIVE:-

61. As it has been described above the Idumus of Ekpoma village group were founded by a large number of individuals who came at different times from Benin or elsewhere, and who settled down on the land of the Enogie. These families were in some cases given titles by the Enogie in order to bind them to him, and in such cases it is possible to recognise a definite clan, headed by the title holders, in some instances the founder was not given any title, but his descendants were perhaps the juju priets for the village. Finally in other cases no particular title was given nor had the founder any particular juju to serve, and the identity of the founder's family has been lost by inter-marriage, further immigrations and other causes. It is, therefore, impossible in most cases to point out an Idumu which is identical with a clan or even an extended family. One Idumu may contain portion of several clans, who from the family point of view are unrelated, though united as being the inhabitants of one village.

62. Except in the case of titled men, where the name goes usually from father to son, the general custom is for a person to take the name of the last generation but one. A small

geneological tree will illustrate this. It was obtained from UKPENU village, Ikpenunone Idumu, which contains three families, two of whom claim descent from one traditional ancestor. Ese



Ese was the traditional ancestor of ABAIMU and EHIWELE. It might be expected that they would call themselves "Ibi-Ese"(-children of Ese), but this is not the case. Ovbiose and Odigie termed themselves Ibi Ehiwele, and any children of Ainabewolo and Ogiolo (who is his distant cousin) will be called Ibi Ovbiose, after the eldest man of the last generation but one. Another point of interest is that Ainabewolo is permitted to marry his cousin, Ogiolo, though this marriage is not enjoined on him, he having other wives from other village, and being permitted to please himself.

67. The third family in this Idumu is not related to these two, but the three together form the Ukpenunone subquarter. This will not however necessarily house the children of Ainobewolo, for they may move any where they like, thus severing their connection with the Idumu as far as general purposes are concerned, but retaining the duty of serving their father's juju at certain specified times. Even Ainobewolo himself may move elsewhere though he will probably return to his father's house when he performs the burial as he is the eldest son, and will inherit his father's property. In this present instance, the family has no particular title or position but if Ovbiose or Odigie were an

an Okhaimo, then Ainambewolo would be forced to return to the house unless he desired to make no use of the title.

64. A further point emerges. Abaimu claims to be a member of the senior branch of Ese's children, but he is not the head of the Idumu. Ovbiose is the Odionwere of the Idumu, by virtue of being the oldest man. Indeed he is the Odionwere of the whole Ukpenu quarter. Odigie ranks the seventh among the Ukpenu Edion and Abaimu third.

65. This leads to the fact that in the Ekpoma village group the internal administrative organisation of the village is not dependent on family organisation. It is not the case that members of a family or extended family live together, headed by the senior member o the family, each village(or whatever this unit is called) being distinct from its neighbour. In Ekpoma the important things are the Otua or Age Grade, and as far as the village is concerned, men take their position purely according to their seniority in their Ǒtu. A man may be the head of his family, but unless he has also served the "Okpor" of the Odionwere in the village Okogele, he can take no place with the Edion in the village meeting. Such a man might be termed "Odidumu"("Senior man in Idumu") but that only recognised his authority as far as purely family matters were concerned, e.g. marriages of daughters, but in the full meeting he would take his place with one of the lower age-grades. As far as the grading is concerned, the whole village meet together, and seniority is reckoned purely by age, irrespective of the Idumu a man may inhabit.

In the instance taken above, when Ovbiose dies, a man called Odia of Ukpenuneke Idumu would be Odionwere (if still alive) and after him Abaimu.

66. Considering first the organisation of a village as a whole it is found that the males are in all the Idumus classed in three age-grades, each with special duties, and a man's passage from one to another is marked with ceremonial, offerings and general rejoicing.

67. When a child becomes old enough to take his share of the

[illegible] ("chief of [illegible]", [illegible] it is [illegible] [illegible] central part of a village [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]).

69. [illegible] of a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

For instance the youths who are at the top of the Ebonuchule tu or so etc. called the "Ebronuta" which means I will never accept be in ' and refer to their duty of extracting or collecting fines from persons punished by the village meeting. The Igele are also sometimes called "Ugiagedion" which means "the people who support the Edion", and many other names.

72. From these Otus are made certain special appointments for particular purposes. Chief of these are the Agale. "Agale" means "divider" and the duty of the Agale is to divide among the Edion the joint fees brought to them by applicants for promotion, fines and other payments. These Agale are perfectly acquainted with the precedence in the village of all persons, and they know the share to which each man is entitled. They have the duty of guarding the Ogo Ile juju, which is the juju of the village meeting. They frequently are used as messengers by the Edion to summon persons to the meeting.

73. The custom of appointment of these Agale varies somewhat in the Ekpoma villages. Three different accounts were given. (1) That the Odionwere appoints one of the junior Edion to perform Agale duties, (2) that it is the duty of the third Odion, and (3) that one of the Igele is appointed permanently, and that he retains his position until he himself becomes Odionwere. Whatever may be the method of appointment, however, the post exists in every village, in many villages there being several of these Egale at the present time.

74. In general, however, as far as the Ekpoma villages are concerned there are far fewer definite appointments than in other village groups. It appears when ever a duty had to be performed for which a particular village had no fixed officer, the Odionwere and the Edion picked out any person or persons who was capable of performance and energetic. Thus it is correct to state that the general affairs of the village, from the administrative point of view were arranged by the Odionwere and his Council for Edion. In stating this it is necessary to add that these duties were not onerous. The whole life of

of a man from cradle to grave was in ancient times governed mainly by custom. Every man knows the custom and the communal life of the village would go on from year to year without much change. The time for making farms, the site of these farms, the payment of yearly services, if any, were all regulated by custom, and the duty of Odion was not so much that of positive ruler, but that of upholuer and interpreter of custom. Their chief fduties were to see that custom was not broken, and to punish persons who by breaking custom interfered with th even tenor of village life. In this aspect the Edion will be considered in the next section.

75. Considering second the organisation of the village as parts of the whole group a further detail is discovered, to which reference has already been made. This is the post of Okhaimo or titled man. It is obvious that a village cannot live entirely to itself, though in those days of advancement it is less possible perhaps than it was in pre-British times. In all times, however, a village had its duty to the Enogie of Ekpoma; it was living on his land, and enjoyed his protection, for which in exchange services and certain obedience was owed. This obedience was enforced by the Ekhaimo.

76. In some instances these titles were given to the founder of the village, possibly as an inducement to remain in Ekpoma, or sometimes as a sign of welcome. It was not always the practice however, to honour the founder thus, for some were independent in character not desiring to place themselves under an obligation to the Enogie. The story told in para 38 above typifies this. Ugeola, the founder of Ukpoke, refused any title himself, and until recent years his line through his eldest son had no title, the title of Eson being given through a woman to a junior branch of his family. His brother Arhe-gieme who founded who founded Akahia, however, was in the beginning given the title of Edohen, and is today a powerful Chief.

77. In Ugioren there are no title holders at all, not in Ugbiyoko. In Ille and Iruekpen there are 11 and 8 respectively. The following

table will show the distribution of these Ekhaimo, and will also show the senior of each. This list does not include titles which have admittedly died out, or which are in dispute by the Enogie and village.

TABLE OF EKHAIMO.

Village	Senior Title.	Other Titles.
Egwarre	Enogie.	1. Uwangue 2. Idogun 3. Eribo 4. Ihaza 5. Osula 6. Esala 7. Egbe
Ukpoke	Eson	Osala
Akahia	Edohen	-
Eboakwara	-	-
Ehanlen	Ero	-
Idumigan	Oseagwa	-
Idumigun	Emibaseogie	-
Ikhiro	Esala	-
Uhumudumu	Iyashere	1. Esogban 2. Osumah
Ukpenu	Edohen	-
Ugioren	-	-
Emando	Esogban	Eyehi
Iruekpen	Oliha	1. Ezomor 2. Esogban 3. Emibaseogie 4. Esahah 5. Osumah 6. Edogun 7. Innah
Igor	Osumah	1. Oliha 2. Oseagwa 3. Ezomor 4. Usolo 5. Idelogo
Ille	Ogiose	1. Esogban 2. Ezomor 3. Ero 4. Ologboshere 5. Iyashere 6. Ihaza 7. Asegwale 8. Ebokor 9. Oza
Ugbiyoko	-	-

78. Of these senior titles, according to the Enogie the first four in order of precedence are (1) Oliha, (2) Iyashere, (3)Uwangue, (4) Edohen. There seems however to have been considerable duplication of titles. It will be noticed that besides Edohen in Akahia (the title referred to as the 4th of seniority) the same name is claimed in Ukpenu. The Oliha title is also claimed in Igor. Besides Osimah in Igor, there are two others, in Uhumudumu and Iruekpen. Ero is duplicated in Ille. Oseagwa is duplicated in Igor, Emibaeogie in Iruekpen. Two persons claim Esogban, in Uhumudumu and Iruekpen, while three claimants came forward for the Ezomor title, from Iruekpen. Igor and Ille. Ille also duplicates the Iyashere title.

79. The most probable explanation for this apparent confusion was given by the Enogie who stated that in the past in Ekpoma titles did not necessarily go from father to son, though the son would get the preference. If however he had not the means to take up the post, it might be bought by another member of the family or even another man in the village. Thus at the present time the descendant of a branch of the family which had let the title lapse still might say he is owner of the title, although he has not taken it and is not recognised as the holder by the Enogie. During the course of this investigation it was found that while the senior titles were generally undisputed, many claimants demanded recognition as holders of other titles.

80. Another cause for dispute is that very few of the present title holders have actually been before the Enogie to take their titles. Several reasons for this were given, some persons complaining of lack of means, but the majority stating that "as Court membership has superseded everything, it is useless to take a title unless it brings Court membership with it". Many actual instance of this were found, namely in

(a) Iruekpen Village. The real Oliha is Uduebor, a senior Odion. He however was too old to attend Court, and put up his younger brother AIKWEMOKAN as member and allowed him to assume the Oliha title. AIKWEMOKAN was then one of the Igele, and he is now a junior Odion. Hi

His Court membership has been recently cancelled for misconduct, and now, of course, Uduebor claims reversion of the title to himself. In this same village Itun, a senior Odion, is the right holder of Esawa title. He allowed his younger brother Unuigbe to use it to get a Court Warrant, but is now claiming it a reversion, Unuigbe's membership having been cancelled for misconduct. Finally in Iruekpen, Ihokan a young man is a present Court member claiming the Ezomor title. This is not his own but belongs to his senior brother Ogwafa who allowed him to use it. Also Ikhiois a Court member claiming Esogban title, which

Also Ikhio is a Court member claiming Esogban title, which

really belongs to Okwelegbe a senior Odion.

(b) Uhumudumu Village. Abulu was Court member claiming title of Iyashere, which really should belong to one Ehigalua, an Igele, but member of the senior branch of the family. Abulu is now in prison, and Ehigalua is reclaiming the title.

(c) Igor Village. Osubor, the second Odion is the holder of Idologo title. He allowed his junior brother Omigie to take it for purposes of getting a Native Court Warrant.

(d) Uknoke Village. Okhilua is the descendant and holder of the juju of Ogiole, the original founder of the village. In olden times this family held aloof and refused a title,. When, however, he came to the conclusion that Court membership was impossible unless a title was taken, he went to the Enogie and said he wished to be Osala. This title is now disputed by the village, as Okhilua's Court membership has been cancelled for misconduct.

81. Although the above information strictly belongs to the next section, it has been recounted here to explain the fact that very few of the Ekhaimo have at this present day taken their titles before the Enogie as they used to do in the past, since the people have come to the conclusion that Court membership has entirely superseded native position in the Ekpoma group.

82. In olden times, however, the Okhaimo of a village was a person of influence because his position carried him outside his village to the Enogie in Egwarre. If the Enogie wished to consult

the village on a matter of general interest he would summon the Ekhaimo. Representatives of the Edion might also go, but in most cases the Ekhaimo having ascertained the views of their village would lay them before the Enogie. They also informed the Edion of the opinion of the Enogie, passed on any orders or messages and generally acted as the representative of the Enogie in the village. It has already been stated that their private influence would probably depend on the distance of the village from Egwarre, and the strength of the Enogie himself. The Elders, in the course of this investigation, have been very emphatic that except as he speaks the message of the Enogie, the Okhaimo has no personal position outside his "Otu", that he cannot summon a village meeting himself, and that he must refer all messages and instructions to the Odionwere. There is little doubt, however, that in pre-British days the influence and power of the Ekhaimo was very considerable, and that it is only the magnification of Court members that has thrown ordinary native title holders into the shade.

83. The senior title holder, then, was the head of the village from the point of view of the Enogie. The many other titles in certain villages were taken as honour titles by rich men, or were given to founders of new families who came to Ekpoma territory founding new Idumus. Some of them had special duties, as for instance Erbe in Egwarre, whose duties will be discussed in the Judicial section. Their special duty was, however, to form the village group council to discuss general matter with the Enogie. The Ekhaimo were first summoned alone, but if the matter was controversial they would be deputed to obtain the opinion of the Edion. Either a full meeting would be called before the Enogie or the opinion of the villages reported by the Ekhaimo.

84. Edohen in Akahia is the senior title of all Uhiele Village, and he transmits the Enogie's orders to each of the others. If anything had to be collected in the form of service to the Enogie, he was responsible for the performance of this duty. Each of the rest of the Igule villages dealt directly with the Enogie through the Ekhaimo of the village. If in any village there was no Ekhaimo, the Enogie's

message went directly to the Odionwere.

85. The chain of authority has thus been traced through the Age grade to the Odionwere, the head of the Age grades, and thence to the titled man, who might or might not be one of the Edion himself, but who has the duty of supervising the village for the Enogie. The supreme executive authority in Ekpoma Village group, and the unifying influence of the whole is the Enogie himself.

86. The position of Enogie is hereditary, the succession passing to the eldest son. If he is not of sufficent age to perform his duties a guardian-usually his senior uncle- is appointed as regent. Paragraph 10 Part 1 outlined the general procedure in succession.

87. The Enogie had a large number of privileges. Adultery committed with his wife meant the death of both parties unless the Enogie wished to retain them a slaves. If any woman pronounced the word "Igben" or if any person said it to her she at once became the property of the Enogie, and only the Oshodi could undo the action. Likewise any woman sitting on the Enogie's throne became his wife. Any person or animal falling into a latrine pit became his property. The Enogie could take any woman he liked by hanging a coral necklace round her neck. If a cow bore twinx calves all were given to the Enogie who had to give a wife to the owner. Any leopard or boa-constrictor had to be taken to the Enogie, and he was entitled to a leg of any other game killed in his land.

88. The Enogie had also the right of requesting peformance of work by the villages, except where as a privilege he had granted exemption. He took the heads of all persons slain in war and captives, from whom he made presents to his friends. The Enogie also gave titles, and summoned the Ekhaimo to discuss general policy. His Judicial powers will be discussed in the next section.

89. His own village, Egwarre, is for the most part descended from members of the royal house. He has a certain number of actual titled men in Egwarre whom he sends out to the Igule villages as his messengers, but there are in addition a number of "princes", brothers and sons of the Enogie, who have no specific title.

B. SURVIVALS FROM THE PAST.

90. All the above institutions survive today. The Enogie is the head of the community, the Ekhaimo exist in nearly every village, and whether or not they have actually taken their titles, the right men are known. In each village is the Odionwere and Council of Edion, and they have their Ogale who in most cases act as their messengers. It has already been described, however, that to be a Court member has till now been the "Ultima Thule" of the senior men of the village, and these Court members have without any doubt usurped local influence which never belonged to them in the past. The executive power frequently has been appropriated by persons who were appointed for judicial purposes alone. Where these persons have no natural position of their own, as in Iruekpen, their action has brought a revulsion of feeling against them in their villages, leading to disturbances and unrest.

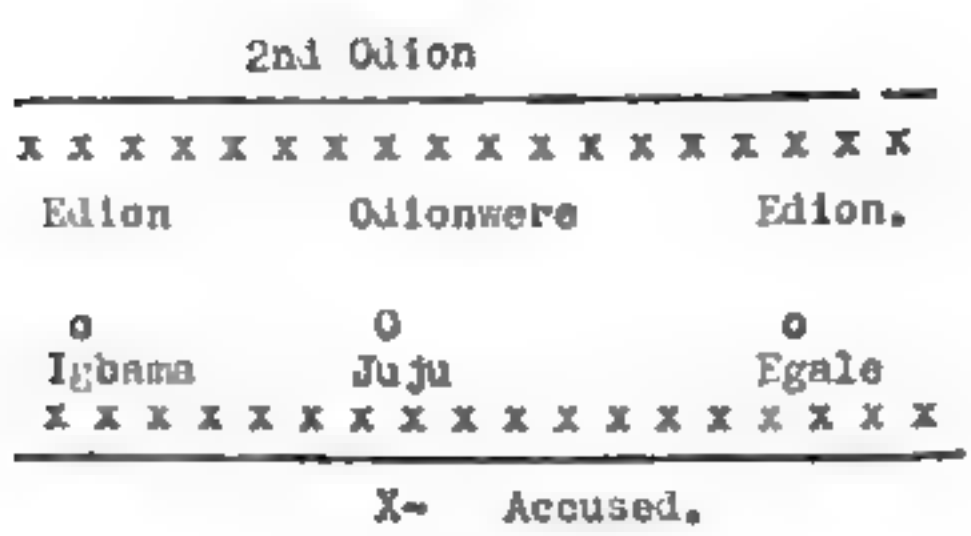
V. J U D I C I A L.

A. Ancient System. 101. The interpretation and enforcement of the system of Native Law and Custom was the prerogative of the Edion, and each village was, except for the crime of murder, a self contained judicial unit. Minor disputes, matrimonial troubles small civil cases and minor breaches of the peace, were settled in the Idumus, where usually the elders of the two families involved would meet together and settle the matter then and there. Major crimes involving the peace of the whole village were settled by the general meeting of the Edion. Murder cases were tried by the meeting of the Inotus, WHO WERE THE SENIOR Judicial Authorities for the whole Village Group.

102. In the Ekpoma Village Group the position of Inotu

Inotu appears to have been synonymous with that of Senior Edion, and the name was used to denote a special function of these Senior Edion. There was no special appointment was there was at Opoji or Uromi or certain other districts, with the exception that the President of Inotu trials was a particular appointment in Ewarre, which carried with it the title of Ebe. The principle underlying the Inotu system was that to destroy a life was to weaken the whole group. Therefore the representatives of all the units of the group are concerned, and the Enogie as the head of the group and the embodiment of the corporate principle was primarily interested in the punishment of the murderer. Therefore the Inotus of all the villages met together, and in addition the Inotus of Opoji and Egoro would attend as well. If the murder was committed in Ekpoma Village Group, the Ebe was president of the meeting, while the "Odinotu or Senior Inotu of Opoji or Egoro would take charge in their respective Village Group. This uniting of the three groups was only done in the case of murder. The Inotus of Ekpoma would sometimes meet to try other cases where individual village could not achieve a satisfactory settlement, but this was not usual.

103. Cases other than murder were tried by the Edion in the villages. The place of trial was the OKOGELE. This is a long narrow shed, a thatched roof supported on posts, in the centre of which is the Ikhimi tree, the juju of the Okogele against which are placed the "Ekpor" of the Edion. The Odionwere si ts opposite the tree, and the other Edion beside him. Sometimes the Eale sit on the floor of the Okogele, ready to do the bidding of th Edion. The following is a rough diagram showing the grouping observed at Uhumudumu Village.



Igele. Ehrenata.

104. It will be observed that the Odionwere's place is in the cen re with the second in seniority on his left. When the rest of the Edion went out to consult about the case, these two remained in their places. There was no special seat for the Ekhaimo. In Uhumudumu village there are at present one Okhaimo who is an Odion- the Esogban, and two are Igele-Iyashere and Osumah. Only the first was in the Okogele; Iyashere(although he is the senior title) and Osumah sitting with the Igele. This, incidentally is further proof that as far as mere village activities are concerned the Seniority goes by age grade and not by title.

105, All the Edion were entitled to be present and to sit, taking a share of the fines. The Igbama or Junior Edion sat opposite the Edion, ready to carry out any particular task, such as swearing juju. The Igele and Ehrenata, being the persons responsible for production of the accused and for enforcement of judgments grouped themselves in front of the Okogele .

106. Each Idumu had its own Okogele or meeting place, which is used as a common meeting ground, not only for judicial purposes. The central Okogele for a village is usually situated in the"Ughele" or main street between the Idumus, and sometimes in the Senior Idumu. The Uhiele group o villages all met at Ikpoke, where the senior

senior Otorele is situated though in certain judicial matters Ebonkwara, Ohanle and Ian i an would meet together alone. There is a similar Otorele in Ameluwase Idumu of Ubumujumu, where the [illegible], I lower and I pemu are set for special purposes the Otorele have to be maintained in a state of repair by the [illegible] Ele. Ad[illegible], as it has been mentioned already, the Jani Ilinu [illegible] to perform or it is looked on as repairing the juju.

107. An important point to be noticed is that trials were strictly local. If both parti[illegible] lived in the same village or group of villages then the ordinary judicial proce[illegible] would be carried out. If the accused person lived in another unrelated village, however, the procedure was in most cases that of "tit for tat". An assault on a member of Ille by a man of Ebonkwara would be repaid, probably with interest, but in very few cases would any trouble be taken to discover the real offender and punish him. Nearly all the villages claim that in ancient days they lived at times almost in a state of war with each other. Some villages might swear peace juju with their neighbours and then the union might meet together to try a case between their members. Only in murder cases would a hue and cry be raised, and the Enotus of the village of the victim were responsible for sending round to summon the assistance of the others. It is seen therefore, that in any trials, the offender was tried by his own authorities to whom he was known, and from whom he could obtain justice. The modern system of rotationary members in a central Court means that it often happens that a case between two persons of Ekpoma might be tried by sitting members from Opoji and Agoro. It cannot be said, therefore, that in this respect the Native Court systems bear much resemblance to the ancient system.

106. When an accused person was brought before the Ellion he was asked if he admitted the charge. If he did the

the punishment was awarded at once. If he made a qualified admission, witnesses would be heard to enable the circumstances to be weighed up. If he made unqualified denial, and the accuser was equally determined, no attempt was made to decide by weight of evidence, but the accused was at once offered the ordeal.

109. Ordeals were two in number, apart from ordinary juju swearing. The Itan ordeal consisted in passing a feather through the tongue, which would stick if the accused was guilty. This could be administered in any village. The SASSWOOD ordeal was given in serious cases, appeals and "secret" cases (poson, witchcraft etc) and could only be given by the Enogie.

110. Witnesses were never segregated during trials, but stood all together. No oaths were sworn before statement, these being used in cases of non-decision by the Idion. When the facts were placed before the Idion they would go into consultation, where the majority vote was taken. It is evident, therefore, that the modern method involving sworn statements and consideration of weight of evidence are foreign to the native mind. The only decision that fell upon the judge in the ancient times was that of deciding the punishment. Guilt was always settled by admission or ordeal.

111. Crimes were classified into three main divisions. First offences against the peace of the Idumus, second offences against the peace of the village, and third the offence of destruction of human life. In the first category come matrimonial disputes, minor assaults, adultery with ordinary man's wife and-strangely enough- attempted suicide. Matrimonial dispute were usually settled by a meeting of the two families involved. A wife was prohibited from using a firebrand against her husband or from saying he would die in agony, or from so striking him that the blood flowed. A husband might do any of these things, being only

only prohibited from house of his wife. The usual punishment for breaches of matrimonial peace was in serious cases the provision of a small goat by the culprit for sacrifice to the family juju. Similarly in the case of ordinary adultery, the usual punishment was the provision of a goat or fowl to the juju and a cloth to the woman. No punishment would be inflicted upon the woman, but the other wives of her household would force her to purify the house by sacrifice. In certain villages a fine of one bag of cowries was imposed in addition on the guilty man.

112. Assault where no words were received would be settled then and there by whoever was present. These episodes were usually in the nature of sudden quarrels, and the parties would be warned and separated. If two persons assaulted one, the Edion of the Idumu would usually fine them a goat each.

113. Attempted suicide was to all intents and purposes not regarded as a crime at all. No punishments was inflicted, but the Edion of the Idumu would make the culprit swear not to repeat the attempt, and he could be forced to sacrifice a goat for purification.

114. In the second category come thefts, dangerous assaults adultery with wives of Edion or Ezeaimo, abduction of women, poisoning, accusation of witchcraft. In addition to these crimes were breaches of the peace in the market or the Ugbele the former of which were tried by the "Market masters" selected from each village.

115. The punishment for theft varied, the amount of the fine being proportional to the gravity of the offence. In Ille the average punishment was 7 bags of cowries (28/-) and replacement of articles stolen. The fine in this case was a punishment for the act of stealing. In Emando the fine was 3 bags of cowries (12/-). Stolen livestock had to be replaced, often with interest, i.e. In Ille a thief who stole a goat had to add another goat when replacing it. A

A person unable to pay the fine might pawn himself or be sold away by the village.

116. Similarly in dangerous assaults fines varied from 1/- worth cowries and a goat up to 4/- worth of cowries. If the victim was an Odion or Ohaiko, the fine would be even higher. The goat was used to purify the ground from the spilt blood.

117. Adultery with the wife of an Odion or Ohaiko was visited with heavy penalties, the crime being an affront to their position in the village as well as to their position as heads of families. The punishment in Uhumudumu was 5 bags of cowries in the case of Edion, and 2 bags in the case of Ibama. In Ijor and outraged Inotu or Senior Odion could seize property from the accused until satisfied, or could order him to be sold. In Ille the fine was 5 bags when the woman was the wife of an Odion and 7 bags in the case of ordinary Ehaiko, and 10 bags in the case of the Ojose. The guilty wife would have her head shaved, be covered with rubbish and her co-wives would dance round her in the street, after which a fowl would be sacrificed for purification. Adultery with the wife of the Ahogie brought death to both parties, though the Ahogie had the right to commute it to perpetual slavery.

118. Abduction of woman was a very serious offence and often led to war. For instance if an Ille man for purposes of gain handed over an Ille woman to a man in another village or group he would be fined 7 bags of cowries and be ordered to replace the woman. If he failed he could be sold, unless he bought himself off by selling all his property. In Uhumudumu he would be fined 5 bags of cowries and his whole house broken. These severe punishments only operated when the woman was already married, and the accused was inciting or assisting her to desert her husband. If the village to which she had gone refused to surrender her, another woman from that village might be seized, this often leading to war.

119. Persons accused of poisoning were sent to Sassywood if they pleaded not guilty. If guilty they were sold. If they were guilty when sent to sassywood they would die. In this crime and that of accusation of witchcraft, the ordeal was always used, the crime being "secret". In the case of witchcraft both accuser and accused drank sassywood if the charge was denied. A person pleading guilty was sold and his house destroyed. His own family could, however, buy him, whereupon he was permitted to stay in the village as a informer.

120. It is worthy of note that theft of foodstuffs and livestock were treated more seriously than thefts of ordinary property, the principle being that in the former case the possibility of gain by the owner was attacked, as well as creating the possibility of starvation.

121. Finally in the third category come murder and manslaughter, tried by the united Inotus. The punishment for murder might be death, very heavy fine or slavery. A rich man might redeem himself by a heavy ransom. Manslaughter was punished by a fine up to £3 worth of cowries. If the deceased was a slave the accused merely had to replace him with another. When the death penalty was imposed the Enogie could interfere and take the accused as his slave. The executioner was appointed by the Enogie.

122. Ugbiyoko village state they were not concerned with Ekpoma judicial procedure. Their cases of murder, poisoning, stealing, abduction and accusation of witchcraft were always taken to Benin for trial. Only ordinary cases were settled by the Edion of the village, and appeals from them lay to Benin. There were no Inotus in the village, and they did not join with Ekpoma for the purpose of murder trials. In other words Ugbiyoko preserved its judicial independence being a trading settlement acknowledging Benin only.

123. As far as the rest of the Ekpoma Village Group is

is concerned, appeals lay to the Enigie from all decisions. Certain villages were [illegible], but all evidence point to the fact that the Enigie was the judicial [illegible] as well as the administrative head of his town. He could order a rehearing of the case by the Edion, and he could try the case in the first instance himself.

124. Judgments were enforced by different people in different villages. Usually it was the duty of the Ernonata, the young men, but inter-ward judgments would be carried out by the Igama, and junior Edion. The method of enforcement was seizure of property of the accused, or if he was indigent he would be sold.

125 Civil judgments for debt and other matters were enforced in the same way. A defaulting debtor would be given time to pay. If he refused then any property- pot, cow or wife- could be seized by the creditor, whether the property of the debtor or not. (Property of Edion and [illegible] were usually exempt from this). The creditor would do his best to seize the property of a powerful or enterprising man who would then assist in recovery of the debt and the redemption of the articles seized. The sale of a judgment debtor was only resorted to in the last extremity.

126. A woman could not divorce her husband, but the husband could put away his wife [illegible] the dowry paid. This matter usually never went to trial, the middle man of the marriage being the one who knew the exact amount paid.

127. In most of the villages there were no fixed messengers to summon accused persons. The Edion could pick out any persons standing by. Usually persons of early manhood were taken, who had recently been made Igele, these being the men called by the nicknames of Ugiagbedion, Ikhimioya and other names (see para:45 above).

128. No fees were demanded from complainants, though they might bring voluntary presents of coconnuts, but the

the [illegible] to collect the fines were entitled to a fee of 3d cowries. In many instances in these messengers reported to the Edion that the [illegible] paid willingly and quickly, but fine might be reduced; so their favour was [illegible].

129. Fines were divided among the Edion trying the cases. [illegible] the Inotus were divided between the Onojia and the Inotu. The persons responsible for division of the fines were the [illegible]. The Senior [illegible] would keep the fines until the amount reached a sufficient total to make division possible the Odion ere as President received a larger share than the other.

130. In conclusion then this review of the ancient judicial system in Ekpoma Village Group has shown that as far as the vast majority of crimes were concerned the trials were local in the villages, all minor matters being settled out of hand by the families concerned. It has also been shown that persons were tried by their own Edion, and not by those of another village. It has finally been shown that the persons responsible for trials were the Edion and not the Eknaimo(unless they were Edion, in which case they took their precedence according to age).

131. Of the judicial institutions described, all exist today, with the exception of the Inotu titles. The name was used only in connection with a special duty of the Edion-trial of murders. As the duty has disappeared so the designation. A certain number of persons state that their fathers exercised the Inotu functions, but as these ceased nearly 30 years ago the memory of most of the people on this matter is vague. The Ogale who often acted as messenger exist today and perform the same functions. Each village still has its Okogele where the Edion met for general discussion, though no longer for judicial purposes.

132. Present Judicial System.

132. B. PRESENT JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

The Ekpoma Native Court was established in 1905, and all cases have been brought there for trial. Stationed in Ekpoma is one Court Scribe and 5 Court Messengers. (There were 9 before the retrenchments which took effect in July 1931). There are at present 12 Native Court Members representing Ekpoma villages, shown as follows:-

Village.	Name of Members.	Title or Rank.	Male Pop:
Egwarre	Olumese Ehiemian	Uncle of Enogie Osuda	299
Ukpoke	-	-	230
Akahia	Aikhomu	Edohen	160
Eboakwara	Ehimua	Edion	62
Ehanle	-	-	57
Idumigan	-	-	61
Idumigun	-	-	26
Ikhiro	Evienbor	Igbama	47
Uhumudumu	-	-	482
Ukpenu	Ovbiose	Odionwere	163
Ugioren	Erhumusele	Odion	137
Emando	Iyare	Esogban	182
Irukpen	Ikhio O Iheokan O	Odion Junior Igele	752
Igor	Omigie O	Odion	274
Ille	Ekokor	Igele	333
Ugbiyoko	-	-	61

N.B. 1 Member each from Ukpoke, Uhumudumu and 2 from Iruekpen cancelled for misconduct.

O These three men have used borrowed titles, having none of their own.

133. The Court sits about six times in a month. Vice presidency is rotationary, the Ekpoma member taking their turn with members from Egoro, Opoji and Urohi. The Enogie of Ekpoma is not a member, being a member of the Central Ishan Native Court.

134. Appeal lies to the District Officer, and in some instances appeal is allowed to the Central Isuan Native Court but this latter privilege is comparatively seldom asked for.

135. A quorum consists of a Vice President and 3 members and a sitting consists of two days. Vice Presidents are paid at the rate of £1 and 10/- for 1st and 2nd day sittings respectively, and members at the rate of 10/- and 5/-. The usual fees summons are charged as provided on the Court Warrant.

136. There have been no recent changes in the Native Court system, but four members have lost their warrants for misconduct, and no new appointments have been made. This has left Ukpoke and Ohumudum with no judicial representative though they are both large villages.

VII CONCLUSION.

167. The details in the above report on the Ekpoma Village Group have been considered at length. As the general customs in Opoji, Egoro and Jrohi are, save for small details the same, it is not proposed to repeat fully in their reports the information already given, except to indicate differences and where it is necessary to support proposals which may be different from those set down above. Finally it must be remembered that the Enogie, has a wide and scattered area to control, inhabited by persons of an independent temperament. Only as he learns to exercise tact and to dispense strict justice will the people render him the willing obedience which will make possible a state of advanced Native Administration.

(Sgd) H.L'M. Butcher

A.D.O.

APPENDIX 3.

List of Places Visited.

Village Group.	Village.	Date.
Ekpoma	Egwarre	28-29/12/31
"	Irueokpen	4.1.32
"	Uhumudumu Ugioren Ukpenu	5.1.32
"	Igor	6.1.32
"	Ugioren Ukpenu	7.1.32
"	Emando	8.1.32
"	Akahia	15.1.32
"	Ebuakwara	26.1.32
"	Ukpoke Idumigan Ikhiro	27.1.32
"	Ukpoke	28.1.32
"	Ille	29-30/1/32
"	Ugbiyoko	3.2.32
"	General Meetings	4- 9/2/32.

Every Village was again visited between 7/9/32 and 17/9/32 for discussion of final proposals.

(Sgd) H.L.M.Butcher.

Asst. District Officer.

APPENDIX 4.

List of Staff.

1. D.E.Eirue: Interpreter: A native of Irrua, and employed in the Native Administration as an Assessment Scribe. He was definitely intelligent and interested, and I think a very careful interpreter.

2. Various representatives of the Enogie of Ekpoma.

APPENDIX 5.

THE "IRHUEN" CEREMONY.

Observed in Egoro Village Group, Ewarre Village on 19, January, 1932.

Performance of the ceremony termed" making Irhuen" is in Egoro, and to some extent in other groups one of the most important acts of a man's life, for on it depends the whole of a man's position in his village during his lifetime, and, what is yet more important, the manner of his burial affecting his whole future existence both in the spirit world and in the feelings of his descendants.

2. Briefly it may be described as a "coming of age" ceremony, as it causes a person to be regarded as a man and not a child in the life of the Village. "Irhuen" means "I tie cloth" and the name is symbolic of the adoption of a cloth by an adolescent youth, young children running about completely nude. The ceremony may be performed at any time whenever the applicant either by his own efforts or by the help of his family can afford the necessary expense. Until it is performed, however, a man remains with the E benughele whatever his age and as such has no share in the division of food at festivals, and no word in the village Councils.

3. The whole performance of the ceremony took seven days. On the first day the applicant brought an offering of cocoanuts, kola nuts and palm wine to the Odionwere of the village, who tied a new cloth round him, knotting it on each hip with a special knot. During the subsequent 6 days the applicant walked about in the Village, in new clothes, absolved from all duties. Into whosoever house he entered the owner had to give him a small present. He was obliged to take meat with every meal. Chalk marks were placed on forehead, shoulders and chest by Edion.

4. On the 6th day the ne lieit killed a cow, which was cut up and cooked by the women of the village. Large quantities of yams were also pounded. On the evening of the 7th day the whole village gathered round the "Igiegan" effigy, symbolic of all past Enogies, in front of the Enogie's house. The applicant brought along bowls of meat lumps of cooked yam. While his boys were bringing the food the applicant went through a mock wrestling match with one of his contemporaries who had not made "Irhuen", who pretended to fall heavily at once, with the excited plaudits of the crowd.

5. When all the food was brought it was examined by the Edion to see if it was sufficient, when approval was given a gun was fired. Then the Agale took a portion of the meat and yams and served the juju, after which he divided the food, a large share going to the Enogie, and the rest to the Edion and Ipele in order. When the first division was completed, two more pots of pounded yam werebrought, which had been cooked by applicant's wife and his eldest sister. Finally a jug of palm wine was brought, some of which was given to the juju and the rest drunk by the crowd. Then the crowd dispersed, taking with them their share of food.

6. The last act in the ceremony was the entertainment of the applicant's own company in his house, with more meat and yam. These numbered about 14 men. Eating, drinking, dancing and gunfire went on all through the night, ending at dawn on the 8th day. After this proceedings terminated and all was quiet again.

7. The central point of the culminating ceremony was the service of the juju, and no food was touched until this was done. Informants later asserted that the Irhuen ceremony was invalid unless the juju was served by the Agale, thereby identifying the applicant with the corporate entity which consists of the present and past members of the Village.

8. The provision of lavish quantities of food demonstrated

applicants finished 1 roll ing, while his victory in the gymnolic wrestling match showed that he had become a man, and had therefore more than a match for his former boyish companions.

A[illegible] 6

[illegible] I[illegible]

[illegible] in Iki Village, Ogodi [illegible] 9.1.36.

Promotion from I[illegible] to I[illegible].

1. The date of this ceremony was fixed by the Odionwere, and was approximately 5 years since the previous promotion. The [illegible] were sent round all the I[illegible], and at the appointed time all the [illegible] Ot[illegible] I[illegible] met at the central Oro ele.

2. While these were assembling the Agbonughele danced around the [illegible] singing traditional songs. The words of two of these were

A. " Owners must tie up their cats, as tigers and leopards are now in the Street."

b. " The tiger has children, but the rabbit has more than the tiger."

Gun and [illegible] were carried by the youths, who performed mimetic dances of a warlike character. Guns were fired as often as they could be reloaded, the powder being provided by the aspirants for promotion.

3. As soon as the Edion were assembled and seated in the Oko ele, the offerings of coconuts, palm wine and kola nuts were brought and presented to the Edion by the Senior of the men being promoted. These were divided between the Edion, the Esai ele(the house of the Otu to which the youths were being promoted) and the [illegible] ele. The juju was served with part of the offerings.

4. The aspirants for promotion were then called in and were addressed by the Odionwere, who informed them of the name of the Igele, "Ugiagbedion"- "the supporters of the Edion and described their duties.

5. A flat dish of chalk paste was then brought, and the juju served. Then the Odionwere put a dab of this chalk on his forehead, his example being followed by all the Senior men in the Okogele. The Odionwere then blessed the youths,

calling down good fortune upon their heads, at the end of each sentence the youths saying "Ise"- "Amen".

6. Finally a dab of chalk was placed by the Senior Agale on the forehead of each aspirant for promotion, whereupon they burst into shouts of joy, and rushed out carrying the plate of chalk into which as many as could from the crowd dipped their fingers.

7. Meanwhile the food was finally divided, each Odion calling his boy to take his share home, and the ceremony was at an end. During the whole time singing and dancing went on outside among the crowd. It was most particularly noticed that the important persons were the Edion; any Okhaimo who was member of a junior Otu sat outside in the crowd.

8. No special body marking or circumcision was done at this time, this having been completed in early boyhood. It should noted that the service of the juju, and the touching with the chalk were important items of the ceremony, without it would not have been complete.

(N.B. The actual [illegible] of the [illegible] can be [illegible] or retired, but the lists are compiled in January, 1952. Many of [illegible] are probably dead, and fort[illegible] promotions are taking place. Therefore only the approximate number will be given as a value).

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]arre	18	-	7
[illegible]	7	[illegible]	
[illegible]	3	2	1
[illegible]	8	-	-
[illegible]le	6	-	1
[illegible]	1	[illegible]	1
[illegible]	7	-	1
[illegible]	2		1
[illegible]	2		
[illegible]	5	[illegible]	1
[illegible]	[illegible]	5	-
[illegible]		[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]		
[illegible]			1
[illegible]		[illegible]	
[illegible]			-

APP 8

Consecutive Number

Village Council

PARTIES

COMPLAINT

DECISION

REASONS

Paid 5/-

Date of Filing _____ _____ Odionsere

S.N.C. Initials _____ Date _____

Consecutive Number

Village Council

PARTIES

COMPLAINT

DECISION

REASONS

Paid 5/-

Date of Filing _____ _____ Odionsere

S.N.C. Initials _____ Date _____

APPENDIX 8

Consecutive Number

E X P O N A.

.....Village

RECEIVED FROM

.....

5/- JUDICIAL FEE

.....Odionwere.

Date;.....

Consecutive Number

E X P O N A.

.....Village

RECEIVED FROM

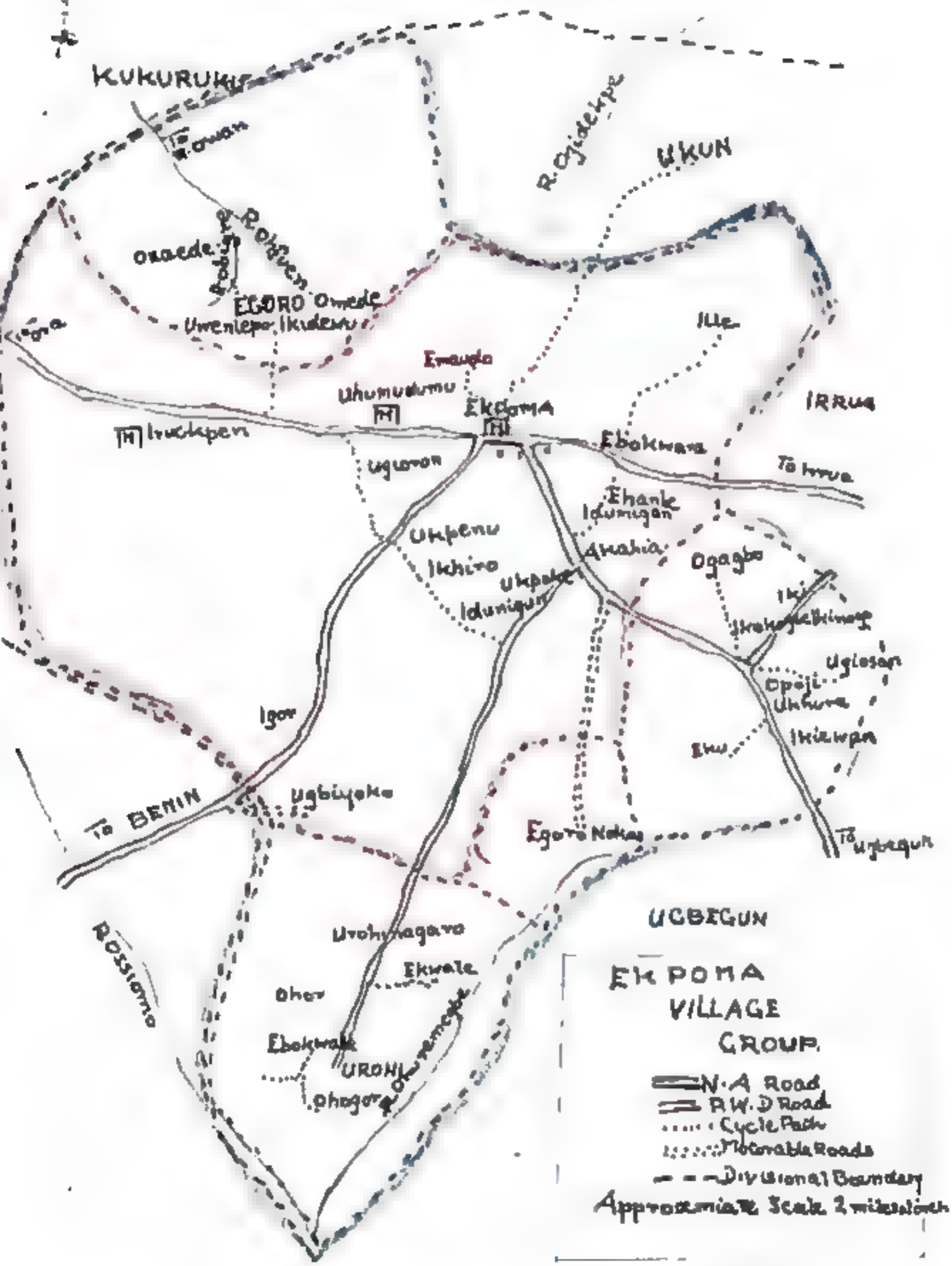
.....

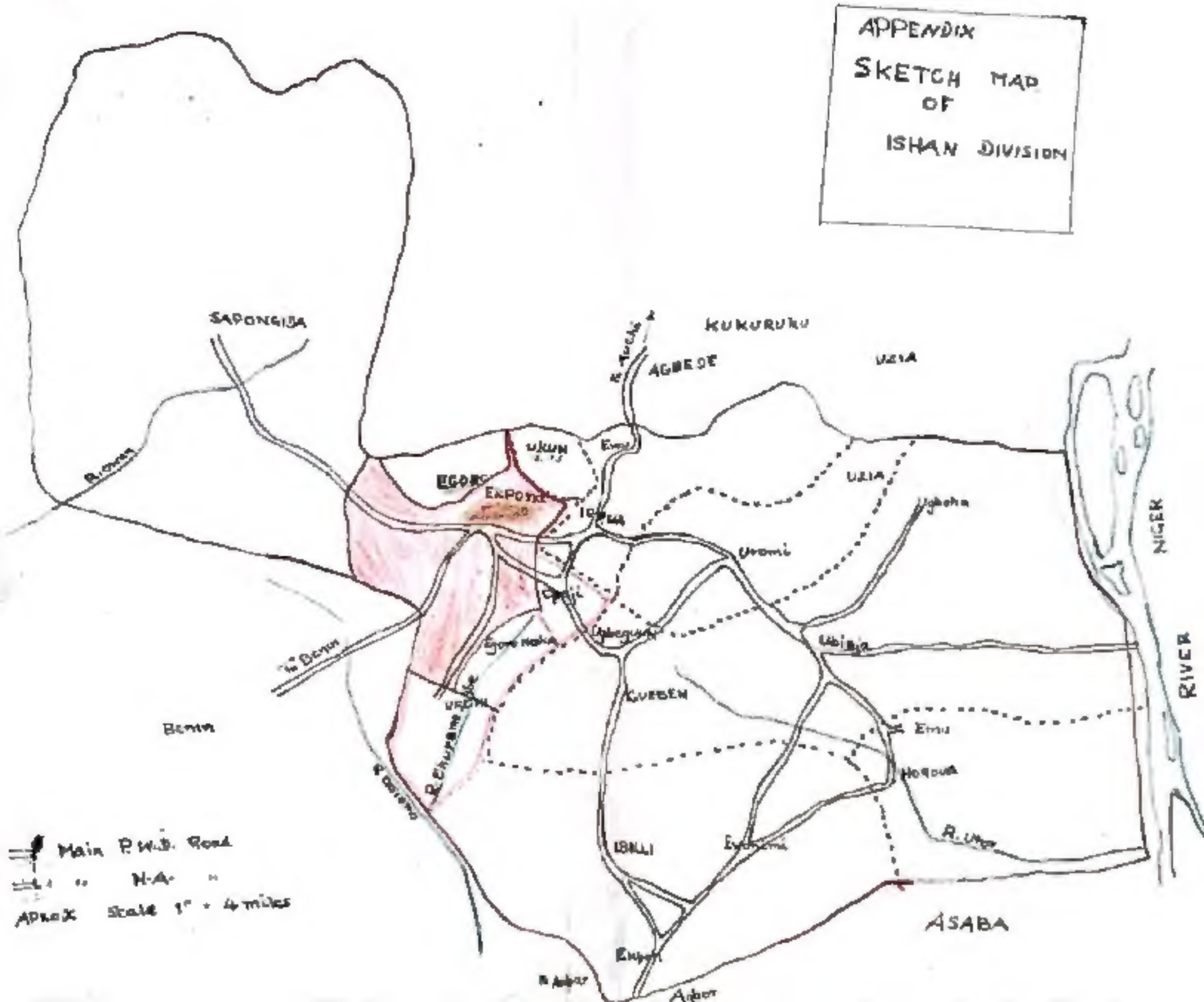
5/- JUDICIAL FEE.

.....Odionwere.

Date; ....

APPENDIX 2.


KUKURUKU
R. Ojidekpe
UKUN
Owede
R. Ohuen
EGORO Owede
Uwenlepo Ikudemu
Ile
Ewaupa
Uhumudumu
EKPOMA
IRRUA
Ikuekpen
Ebokwara
Uguwon
To Irrua
Ehanle
Idunigun
Ukpenu
Ikhiro
Ukpake
Ahahia
Ogagbo
Idunigun
Uglesan
Opeji
Ukhuwa
Igor
Ikiewpa
Ehu
To BENIN
Ugbiyeke
Egoro Nekai
To Ugbegun
UGBEGUN
Uvohunagavo
Ekwele
Ohor
Ebokwale
UROHI
Ohogor
EKPOMA
VILLAGE
GROUP
N.A Road
R.W.D Road
Cycle Path
Motorable Roads
Divisional Boundary
Approximate Scale 2 miles to inch


APPENDIX
SKETCH MAP OF ISHAN DIVISION
SAPONGIJA
KUKURUKU
AGBEDE
UZIA
EGORO
EKPOMA
UZIA
Uromi
Ubiaja
NIGER
RIVER
Benin
Benin
Ubiaja
GUEBEN
Emu
Hokuma
R. Uno
ISHLI
ASABA
Main P.W.D. Road
" N.A. "
Approx Scale 1" = 4 miles

GOVERNMENT PRINTER, LAGOS, NIGERIA

543/10

GREAT IMPORTANCE REQUIRING
NSPORT